

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A paper feeder comprising:

a first paper feed cassette in which to store a recording medium with a lock state that is selected from an unlocked state where the recording medium can be taken out therefrom and a locked state where the recording medium cannot be taken out therefrom;

a locking portion that brings the lock state of the first paper feed cassette into the unlocked state or the locked state;

a second paper feed cassette in which to store a recording medium, capable of selectively entering an unlocked state where the recording medium can be taken out therefrom and a locked state where the recording medium cannot be taken out therefrom;

a lock state transmitting portion that transmits the lock state of the first paper feed cassette to the second paper feed cassette to bring the second paper feed cassette into the unlocked state or the locked state in accordance with the lock state of the first paper feed cassette,

wherein the lock state transmitting portion mechanically transmits the lock state of the first paper feed cassette to the second paper feed cassette, and

wherein the lock state transmitting portion includes:

rotatable lock gears provided for the first paper feed cassette and the second paper feed cassette respectively,

lock portions movable in accordance with rotations of the lock gears respectively, and

lock reception portions that receive the lock portions at the time of the locked state respectively; and

the lock gears are connected with each other so that rotation is transmitted therebetween.

2. (Canceled)
3. (Original) The paper feeder according to claim 1,
wherein the first paper feed cassette is provided integrally with the locking portion.
4. (Original) The paper feeder according to claim 1,
wherein the second paper feed cassette includes an avoidance unit that allows the second paper feed cassette to avoid being brought into the locked state by the lock state transmitting portion.
5. (Original) The paper feeder according to claim 1, further comprising:
an apparatus fixing unit that fixes the paper feeder to a support base when the locking portion brings the lock state of the first paper feed cassette into the locked state.
6. (Original) The paper feeder according to claim 1, further comprising:
a first paper feed cassette unit including the first paper feed cassette; and
a second paper feed cassette unit including the second paper feed cassette;
wherein the first paper feed cassette unit and the second paper feed cassette unit are separated from each other, being removably attached to each other.
7. (Previously Presented) The paper feeder according to claim 6, further comprising:
a unit fixing unit that fixes the first paper feed cassette unit to the second paper feed cassette unit when the locking portion is operated to bring the lock state of the first paper feed cassette into the locked state.
8. (Original) The paper feeder according to claim 7,

wherein one of the first paper feed cassette unit and the second paper feed cassette unit is an image forming apparatus body of an image forming apparatus.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) The paper feeder according to claim 1,
wherein the lock state transmitting portion includes a transmission gear that connects the lock gears with each other and transmits rotation therebetween.

11. (Previously Presented) The paper feeder according to claim 1,
wherein at least one of the lock portions is removable.

12. (Previously Presented) The paper feeder according to claim 1,
wherein one of the first paper feed cassette and the second paper feed cassette that is disposed closer to a support base for supporting the paper feeder than the other has a support base hook that projects toward the support base in accordance with rotations of the lock gears so as to engage with a paper feeder fixing portion provided in the support base.

13. (Previously Presented) The paper feeder according to claim 1, further comprising:

a first paper feed cassette unit including the first paper feed cassette;

a second paper feed cassette unit including the second paper feed cassette, the first paper feed cassette unit and the second paper feed cassette unit being separated from each other and removably attached to each other in a stack; and

a hook provided for at least one of the first paper feed cassette and the second paper feed cassette, the hook being movable in a direction of the stack in accordance with rotations of the lock gear associated therewith;

wherein at least one of the first paper feed cassette unit and the second paper feed cassette unit is provided with an engagement portion engagable with the hook.

14. (Currently Amended) The paper feeder according to claim 12, further comprising:
a first paper feed cassette unit including the first paper feed cassette;
a second paper feed cassette unit including the second paper feed cassette,
wherein at least one of the first paper feed cassette unit and the second paper feed cassette unit includes a unit body having a top on which an engagement portion is formed.

15. (Original) The paper feeder according to claim 14,
wherein one of the first and second paper feed cassette units is an image forming apparatus body of an image forming apparatus.

16. (Withdrawn) The paper feeder according to claim 1,
wherein the lock state transmitting portion includes a belt that transmits the lock state of the first paper feed cassette to the second paper feed cassette.

17. (Withdrawn) The paper feeder according to claim 1,
wherein the lock state transmitting portion includes a link member that transmits the lock state of the first paper feed cassette to the second paper feed cassette.

18. (Withdrawn) The paper feeder according to claim 1,
wherein the lock state transmitting portion includes a controller that controls the locked state and the unlocked state of the second paper feeder cassette.

19. (Withdrawn) The paper feeder according to claim 18,
wherein the second paper feeder cassette includes a power lock portion that brings the second paper feeder into the locked state and the unlocked state; and the controller controls the power lock portion.

20. (Original) The paper feeder according to claim 1, further comprising:

at least one more paper feed cassette in which to store a recording medium, capable of selectively entering an unlocked state where the recording medium can be taken out therefrom and a locked state where the recording medium cannot be taken out therefrom;

wherein the lock state transmitting portion further transmits the lock state of the first paper feed cassette to the at least one more paper feed cassette to bring the at least one more paper feed cassette into the unlocked state or the locked state in accordance with the lock state of the first paper feed cassette.

21-23. (Canceled)